

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM



NEWS RELEASE

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GAO FINDS ILLEGAL STEROIDS EASILY PURCHASED, DIFFICULT TO POLICE

Washington, D.C. – Today Government Reform Chairman Tom Davis (R-VA) and Ranking Minority Member Henry A. Waxman (D-CA) released a new GAO report that finds that illegal steroids are easily obtained over the Internet and that law enforcement authorities face significant challenges in efforts to investigate, prosecute, and deter steroid trafficking.

“The Internet provides a powerful medium in which traffickers can operate. We need to be steadfast in our support of law enforcement officials, who spend their time in the trenches, tracking down steroid distributors in the U.S. and abroad,” said Chairman Davis. “We should also consider more stringent punishment guidelines, which could be a major deterrent for traffickers.”

“Dangerous and illegal steroids are just a mouse click away,” said Ranking Member Waxman. “Parents, teachers, and coaches are on the front lines in the fight against steroid abuse, and they need to know that young athletes and other youth have such easy access to these harmful substances.”

Using simple web searches, GAO found a variety of websites “openly and boldly” peddling dozens of anabolic steroids. Of 22 orders placed with the sites, GAO received 14 shipments. Ten of these were mailed from foreign countries and contained illegal steroids such as stanozolol. Four shipments from within the United States did not contain steroids (as the websites claimed) but other dietary supplements.

GAO also identified smuggling of anabolic steroids — often from Mexico — across international borders and into the United States as an important part of the illegal distribution network.

According to the report, law enforcement authorities face significant difficulties in combating the illegal steroid trade. Challenges include little enforcement assistance

from legal officers in the drugs' countries of origin, the anonymity of the Internet marketplace, the inability to effectively inspect mail for illegal steroids, and weak federal penalties for steroid trafficking.

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